

BIC Livestock, Grazing, Fisheries and Hydrology Subcommittee

Final Draft Desired Conditions

Committee Focus:

How do we develop strategies that both maintain and increase grazing opportunities and improve fishing and hydrology conditions?

Livestock Grazing/Range

Desired Condition: Livestock Grazing Allotments that provide sustainable forage and water for grazing livestock on the range, while moving toward desired ecological, social, and economic outcomes.

Vegetation layers contain a diverse array of native species distributed across the landscape. Perennial native bunchgrasses dominate most grasslands and shrublands. Native grasses, grass-like plants (sedges and rushes), forbs and various shrubs characterize the forest understory. Riparian zones and meadows are characterized by wetland species, including grasses, sedges, rushes, and riparian hardwoods. Establishing native species is a priority and should be the long-term goal. However, non-native species may be considered in planning efforts for reclamation of highly degraded areas if they support desired outcomes such as competition with invasive non-native plants, stabilization of soils, and providing forage and cover.

The distribution and abundance of vegetation within grasslands and shrublands create conditions that are ecologically resilient, sustainable, and compatible with maintaining desired disturbance processes. These conditions support the capacity of grasslands and shrublands, and understory plants in forested environments to reproduce and persist on the landscape as well as respond to potential changes in climate.

Sources of water are distributed on the landscape to assure appropriate forage utilization throughout the allotment as well as reduce livestock impacts to riparian areas.

Fisheries

Desired Condition: Protect, restore, and maintain National Forest aquatic and riparian habitats to support the conservation and restoration of native fish and wildlife and contribute to the broad sense recover of ESA species. Consideration should be placed on achieve broad sense recover for state, federal, and tribal endangered, threatened, and sensitive species (e.g. state, federal, and tribal listed salmon, steelhead and bull trout) and addressing state, federal, and tribal conservation goals. All native aquatic and riparian dependent populations (i.e. plant, invertebrate and vertebrate species) are highly viable and sufficiently abundant, productive, and diverse (in terms of life histories and historic, current, and future geographic distribution).

Hydrology/Watershed

Desired Condition: To have sufficient water quantity and quality in National in-stream flows to meet federal, state, local, and tribal legal water requirements. Water quality is sufficient to meet or exceed regulatory requirements of approved beneficial uses.

Watersheds are comprised of upland and riparian areas. Both are of importance and may require active management to achieve and sustain desired hydrology and watershed outcomes.

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Riparian areas consist of assemblages of native dominated riparian-dependent plants and animals free of invasive, non-native species and provide for dispersal and travel corridors, as well as connectivity, between geographically important areas for both terrestrial and aquatic animals and plant species within the Plan Area.

Quality (e.g., temperature, turbidity, and dissolved oxygen) and quantity of surface and groundwater meets federal, state, local, and tribal legal requirements. Biological, physical, and chemical integrity of aquatic, wetland, and riparian habitat is maintained and allows for the survival, growth, reproduction, and mobility of individuals sufficient to support communities.

Vegetation is composed of the anticipated cover of plant species associated with the site environment; hydric species are present and are not replaced by upland species. Herbivory and trampling are appropriately managed to enhance or maintain the resiliency of the sites.

The ecological and hydrologic structure and function of springs, peatlands, runout channels and wetlands are maintained and restored.

The productive potential and hydrologic function of soils is maintained or restored, including post activity or disturbance, at natural or similar levels that contribute to long-term sustainability of ecosystems. Soil properties support a plant community typical of natural or desired conditions.

Soil physical and chemical properties (texture, porosity, strength, coarse fragment content, and fertility) and organic matter (surface woody debris, humus) are at levels that maintain potential soil productivity and hydrologic function (infiltration, percolation, and runoff).

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Possible Management Action

These actions may include targeted management activities to address over-stocked forests, treatment of invasive non-native plants, and fuels management.

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